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SPELLJAMMER

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ADVENTURES IN WILDSPACE

SPELLJAMMER™

GUEST-STARRING
RIVA SILVERCROWN
OF
DRAGONLANCE®

KRARR
•
QUESADA
•
PANOSIAN

THROUGH THE HEAVENS, ACROSS THE MYRIAD STARS, A SPELLJAMMING GALLEON HURTLES ALONG THE TRAIL OF PHLOGISTON IN A DESPERATE GAMBIT TO EVADE THE OVERWHELMING FORCES THAT PURSUE IT.

AS A METEOR STORM BURNS BRIGHTLY IN THE PHLOGISTON, THE PILOT IS REMINDED THAT EVEN THE MOST VALIANT MUST FLEE TO FIGHT ANOTHER DAY.

THIS SPELLJAMMING ADVENTURER SEEKS A SAFE PORT AND A CHANCE TO BUY TIME UNTIL HIS FINAL RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY.

EVERY MORTAL WHO DARES TO GO ADVENTURING KNOWS THAT HE OWES THE GODS A DEATH. AND NO MAN KNOWS BETTER THAN HE THAT THE CAUSES MOST WORTH FIGHTING FOR ARE THE ONES THAT WILL BE ULTIMATELY LOST--AND YET STILL HE FIGHTS ON...

AND SO FATE OFFERS ONE FINAL REFUGE ON A WORLD CALLED KRYNN...

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FATE BECKONS AND NOT EVEN THE BOLDEST CAN DISOBEY...

FOR EVEN THE BOLDEST KNOW THAT THEY ARE NOT IMMORTAL...

AND IF FATE BECKONS THE BOLD, THEN THERE IS NONE BOLDER THAN THIS MAGIC-USING REFUGEE FROM ANOTHER WORLD.

HE HAS LIVED A DOZEN LIFETIMES, EACH FILLED WITH GLORIOUS ADVENTURE. AMONG THE MYRIAD PATHS HIS FEET BESTRODE HE FOUND DARK SECRETS--

--ANCIENT ARTS. SPELL-JAMMING IS A MEDIUM EXCLUSIVE TO WIZARDS AND PRIESTS. THIS MAN WOULD VOCIFEROUSLY DENY EITHER CALLING.

YET IT IS HIS CAPACITY FOR SPELLCASTING--BOTH BOUGHT WITH GOLD AND EARNED BY CONQUEST--THAT ENABLES HIM TO SLIP BEYOND THE BONDS OF HIS MORTAL SOIL--

--AND SAIL AMONG THE STARRY HEAVENS THAT ARE THEMSELVES THE ABODE OF **GODS.**

HOWEVER, NO MAN KNOWS BETTER HOW FICKLE THE HAND OF A JEALOUS GOD CAN BE...

HE STRAINS EVERY RESOURCE TO CONTROL THE SPELLJAMMING CHAIR ABOARD HIS SHIP--HIS ONLY CHANCE TO ESCAPE WHAT WOULD BE CERTAIN DEATH FOR A LESSER MAN.

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A STRANGER HAS ARRIVED IN TALADAS.

IN A WORLD WHERE THE STRANGE IS COMMONPLACE, THE COMMON-PLACE HAS BEEN DISTURBED BY SOMETHING INFINITELY STRANGER...

HURRY, KTARRH, BEFORE THOSE BAKALI CLOSE IN ON IT!

THIS INTRUDER IS ABOUT TO BE MADE UNWELCOME ON TALADAS AS HE CRASHES IN ON A FEAST HELD BY ONE OF ITS RACES--THE BAKALI...

ROTTEN BAD LUCK, WHAT! SUPPOSE I OUGHT TO BE JOLLY GLAD I SALVAGED M'SPELLJAMMING CHAIR!

SEE HERE, CHAPS, I KNOW IT'S DEUCED BAD FORM TO BARGE IN ON YOU UNANNOUNCED! COULDN'T BE HELPED, DON'T YOU KNOW?

YOU END OUR FEAST, SKY-MAN! SHAME US BEFORE OUR GODS!

SKY-MAN RUIN FEAST--SO NOW SKY-MAN *IS* FEAST!

IF YOUR TABLE ETIQUETTE IS AS OBJECTIONABLE AS YOUR HOSPITALITY, THEN YOU NEED A LESSON IN MANNERS.

WELCOME OR NOT, THE INTRUDER IS ABOUT TO GIVE HIS ATTACKERS A LESSON IN SWORDSMANSHIP BASED ON SKILLS HONED ON THREE SCORE WORLDS...

NOT A VERY TALKATIVE LOT, ARE YOU? PERHAPS MY SWORD SPEAKS A LANGUAGE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND!

THE BAKALI OF TALADAS HAVE NEVER HEARD OF THE SWORDSMEN OF ASTRYLON OR THE KNIGHTS OF THE ORDER OF THE WHITE PLUME...

...AND NEITHER HAS SHE!

YOU, WHOEVER YOU ARE, GET BEHIND THE DRAGON BEFORE THEY SURROUND YOU!

SEE WHAT GOOD MANNERS WOULD HAVE SAVED YOU, M'LAD? BAD BREEDING IF YOU ASK ME!

BEEN ON THE RUN TOO LONG, M'GIRL, BAD FOR THE MORALE--*VERY!*

SO KIND OF YOU TO POP ROUND, M'DEAR! LOVELY AFTERNOON WE'RE HAVING, OR IS IT MORNING? CAN'T TELL!

BAKALI DON'T LIKE INTRUDERS! YOU'RE EITHER THE BRAVEST ADVENTURER I'VE EVER SEEN OR THE MOST FOOLISH.

JUST ***WHO*** ARE YOU AND ***WHAT*** ARE YOU DOING HERE?

ALL IN GOOD TIME, M'GIRL! THESE CHAPS' SOCIAL ETIQUETTE NEEDS IMPROVING AND I'M THE MAN TO DO IT!

THE VERY MAN.

AS FOR BEING BRAVE OR FOOLISH, WELL, I'VE BEEN CALLED BOTH.

BUT THE ONES WHO CALLED ME THE LATTER DIDN'T LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO REPEAT IT!

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE HANDLE A RAPIER LIKE THAT IN ALL MY LIFE!

BY THE BY, GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, ETERNAL GRATITUDE, *ET CETERA, ET CETERA...*

DO YOU HAVE A ***NAME*** TO GO ALONG WITH THE ***BRAVADO?***

SIR GILES WARWICK, KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF THE WHITE PLUME OF ASTRYLON--AND, OF COURSE, YOUR DEVOTED SERVANT.

BY THE BY, ***WHERE*** ARE WE AND ***WHO*** ARE YOU?

RIVA SILVERCROWN, KNIGHT OF SOLAMNIA... AND THIS IS TALADAS, OR AT LEAST I *THINK* IT STILL IS...

NATURALLY YOU'LL JOIN ME FOR DINNER...

CLAP CLAP CLAP

I SAY, SWOGGS, GUESTS FOR DINNER --LAY ON THE VERY BEST, EH, WHAT?

INDEED, SIR, AND MAY I SAY WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE IT IS TO HAVE COMPANY AGAIN.

IN THE EARLY EVENING, SWOGGS SERVES A SUMPTUOUS FEAST IN RIVA'S HONOR AS SIR GILES REGALES HER WITH TALES OF SPELLJAMMING MAGIC, TRAILS OF PHLOGISTON, AND YARNS OF DARING DO...

...SPELLJAMMING? ...A MANSERVANT IN A DIMENSIONAL CLOSET WITH A LARDER AND WINE CELLAR?

ASTRYLON AND OTHER WORLDS? THAT'S A LOT TO SWALLOW, SIR GILES!

THANK YOU, NONE FOR ME, SWOGGS. I NEVER DRINK WINE.

PITY. BEST ASTRYLONIAN RED, LAST BOTTLE, M'DEAR.

I'LL TRY TO CONTAIN MYSELF.

WELL, I'LL JUST HAVE TO REGALE YOU WITH MORE STORIES.

FORTUNATE FOR YOU I'VE LED A SINGULARLY REMARKABLE LIFE.

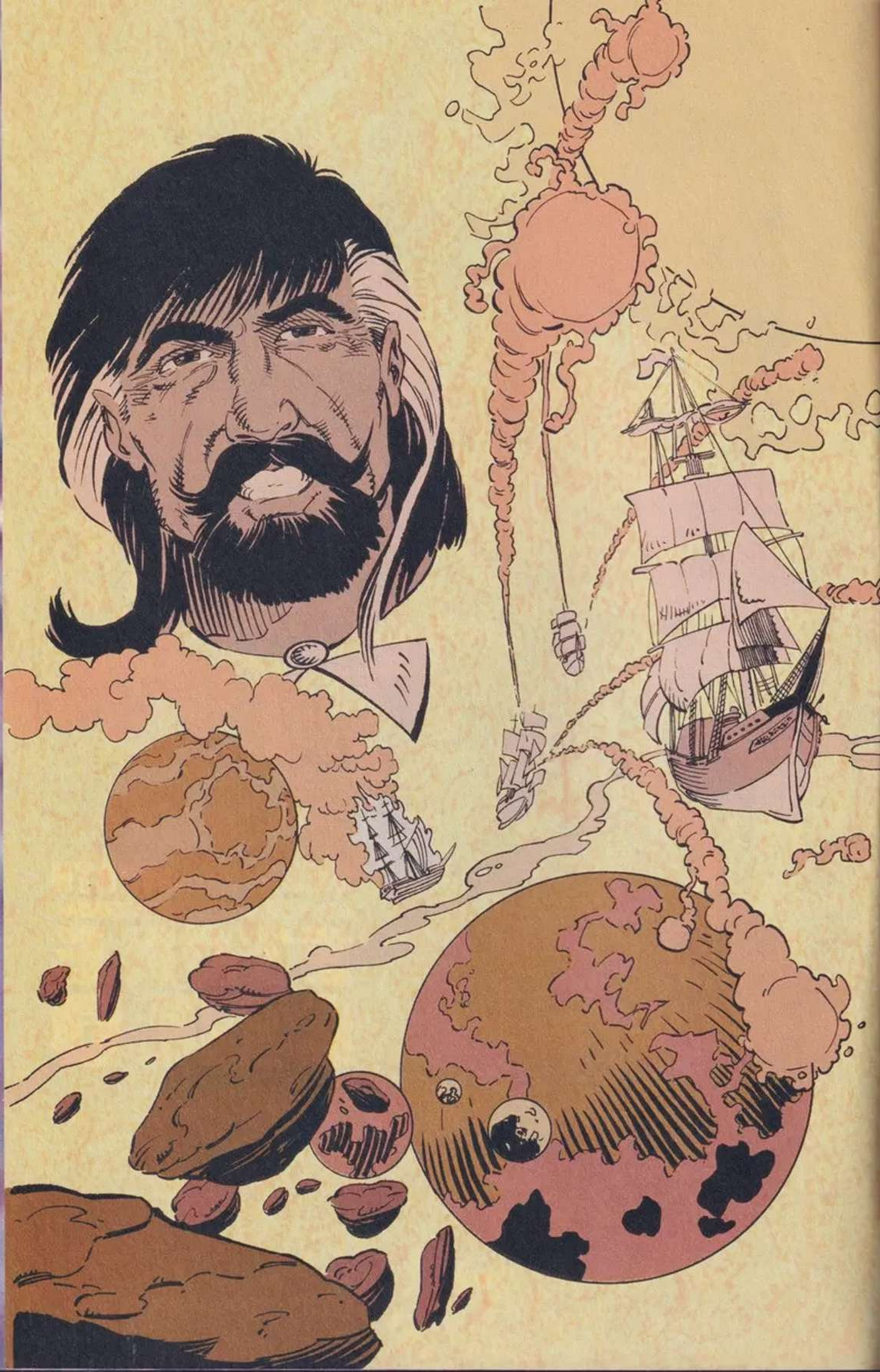
YOU'RE CERTAINLY IMPRESSED WITH YOURSELF. DIDN'T ANYONE EVER TELL YOU THAT MODESTY IS A VIRTUE?

MODESTY IS FOR ORDINARY MEN. I NEVER FOUND TIME FOR IT.

BESIDES, YOU SHOULDN'T JUDGE PEOPLE SO HARSHLY, RIVA. EACH OF US HAS A SIDE THAT WE RARELY REVEAL.

MY LIFE WAS DECIDED BY FATE AND CHOICE. I MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR IT.

Strange how tales become legends and how legends become myth. Tales are told for fear that great deeds will be forgotten and that lessons learned by pain and suffering will have to be learned all over again by the unwary. Some will have you believe there are no more heroes and some will say that the flames of chivalry are dead. But I've lived bold, lass, and I forswear such lies, for the songs of heroes still echo in my memory and embers of chivalry still burn in my heart. The spirits of a thousand valiant comrades cry out for me to bear witness to bold deeds, heroic sacrifices, and blood shed in the sacred name of a lost cause. No, modesty is the cant of the timid—of weaklings more ready to fawn and toady to the proud and vain than dare speak the truth like free men! That's not for a fitting epitaph for yours truly, Sir Giles Warwick.



But my spirit races ahead of my thoughts... Where was I...? Ah, yes... Before destiny placed me on this spinning orb in the heavens—what's that you call it—Krynn? Taladas? hard to keep them straight when you've seen three score worlds—I was running for my very life! Barraran galleons on me tail. They wanted to keel haul me across the galaxy and hang me from a yardarm! It seems they objected to me pirate ways—not that I'm so very proud of 'em m'self. But desperate times call for desperate measures, eh, what? Like the time I met a score of buccaneer champions in mortal combat to earn me place among them. But that's another tale altogether. Some fine starry night I'll have to regale you with that one.

The name of "Barrara" never assaulted you ears, I'll wager! Thoroughly bad lot, Barrarans, if you ask me, but then I'm prejudiced—for they're my mortal enemies. Not to be trusted! Never buy a used galleon from a Barraran, lass, just isn't done! But I'm getting ahead of m'self again. Bound to happen when you haven't broken bread with another living soul for months on end. Me manservant, Swoggs, is a nice chap but he's just a magical projection—not real flesh and blood. But I promised you a good yarn and I'm the very fellow to keep faith with that promise—the very man!

Astrylon, that's me native world! The word never caressed your ears, eh? Little wonder—on the far side of the galaxy—not many of us ever steered a course through these parts before. Fortune destined me to be the last of my kind, that's my sad tale. But back to cases, lass. Our world was a republic based on free trade for free men who spoke the truth and challenged the forces of tyranny, deceit and hypocrisy with strong arms that held keen blades. The Knights of the Order of the White Plume we were, guardians of Astrylon and a bolder company of lads your eyes never beheld.

Swordsmen we were, lass, and not timid about exercising our skills in perilous times. In war or peace, no insult went unanswered, no challenge unmet, and no wrong unavenged. And if I felt the least bit bored, just when the old sword arm ached for action, just when ennui reared its ugly head, there'd be a bit of the old thrust and parry and before long I was right as rain. No scurrilous dog ever cast an aspersion on my honor without tasting cold steel for his effrontery. But for all these high spirits, ours was a high civilization, not like those Barraran jackals.

Barrara was Astrylon's sister planet, but no more like it than a shooting star to a comet. Their grasping ways filled them with contempt for all expressions of humanity that ennoble the mind and lift the spirit, the very things that caused the noble Astrylonian race to exceed its grasp to reach for the heavens. For on Astrylon our artists' visions filled our souls with wonder and defined our very lives.

It was a golden age. Our spelljamming trading vessels ploughed the starry heavens to bring back the shining gems of the galaxy for us to set on high. Our poets' verses, our painters' and sculptors' visions, our architects' proud towers, and the nobility of our theater—that was our true glory and our fervent creed. Art is the only thing that matters because it is the only thing that ever lasts. Long after the poet is dust, his verses can stir the spirits of the living and win a damsel's heart.

Not that we were effeminate wastrels, mind you. Our roistering, gambling, wenching, dueling, and feuding made us less than divine, but we were *alive*—and *what* lives we led! And believe me, I did my share and more.

Time and again, the call to arms would be sounded and we'd sally forth to thrash the Barrarans, pirates, or some other brigands. These vultures of the galaxy were always trying to filch our trade routes—the life's blood of our republic, as our merchant princes kept reminding us! But there's nothing like a bit of war to exercise the old sword arm—what?! We would return in triumph; honor our dead, and go back to our revelries—yet never forgetting to honor the Muse of the Arts. The shadow of disapproval is in your eyes, lass, and it doesn't become you. After all, you might have relished such a life!

But our merchant princes were not so content! Like all tradesmen they only wanted more and were none too particular about how they got it. They schemed to fill their coffers while they sold the rest of us out to the highest bidder. If I'd known then what I learned only when it was too late, I would have carved up the lot of them with me rapier. But ignorance is bliss, and while our merchant princes plotted with our enemies, I was too distracted by a woman's charms to notice or care about anything else.

For *she* had arrived—sorceress, enchantress, intriguer… seductress… her name was *Nimone*.

In those days I had a weakness for a fair face and figure, and I never was as soft in the head over a wench as I was over her. She wrapped me 'round her little finger and practically trained me to eat out of her hand, bloody fool that I was! No, she wasn't some silly, coquettish flatterer. She wasn't just beautiful; she was brilliant, fascinating, compelling —the equal of any man! She was the greatest magic user I've ever known, and I've known more than me share. Just one look in her eyes, soft music, a full moon (all three of 'em on Astrylon, mind you), sweet nothings in the ear, and you know the rest. On the other hand, maybe you don't know the rest. Oh, Riva, you've got pluck, m'girl, but you're *so* naive!

Nimone, the cunning she-devil, brought a proposal to the Doge of Astrylon and the Diet of Elders. Three rival trading worlds summoned us to join them in a holy war against the Barrarans. The Doge felt the weight of his years and knew that the days of his life were numbered. And so, he saw this as fortune's boon—an opportunity to get the hotheads off the planet while the Diet of Elders chose his successor. Otherwise, our merchant princes and feudal clans would have plunged us into a civil war before you could say, "The speed of light!" *Politicians*—vaporize the lot of 'em, that's what I say!

Nimone begged me with all her winning ways to let our rulers decide the issue and not speak out against this adventure. Torn between patriotism and my passion for this wench, what could I do? I knew the mysterious byways of the Phlogiston well enough, but not the hidden depths in that woman.

The Knights of the White Plume consented to the alliance to keep the peace on Astrylon, not because we cared a fig for the cause—and that was as much our undoing as anything. Mark my words, a half-hearted effort to make war is no way to make war at all. If only I could have seen past the beguilement of that enchantress I might have recognized the whole thing as the treacherous stratagem it was. But no, not yours truly, Sir Giles Warwick—he was too busy being a love-besotted cock of the walk for that!

All I ever asked of life was decent food and drink, good companions, smart clothes, a well-forged blade to put paid to my enemies, and some inspired verses to woo a comely wench. Is that so very much, I ask you? There's that shadow on your face again, lass! Remember, those who have never tasted a rare vintage have no idea just how intoxicating wine can be.

The Knights of the White Plume were determined to live bold and die that way if fate decreed. We sallied forth to make a good show of it, even if our hearts weren't in it, and thrash the Barrarans once and for all. But no sooner did we reach the rendezvous coordinates than we learned of our betrayal; of how our precious allies had forged a new alliance with the Barrarans on condition that they all unite to annihilate our armada. Fortune deserted us, and our enemies made a thorough job of it! There's an epic longing to be told if ever there was one! One day I'll tell you all the details, but it's not polite dinner conversation.

They left me for dead in the wreckage of a galleon, bleeding like a stuck troll from a dozen wounds. Mortal enemies, the very pirates Astrylon had waged war on in times past, found me and nursed me back to health—but not out of the goodness of their black hearts, no, m'girl. But rather because the Barrarans had placed a bounty on the head of any Astrylonian unlucky enough to survive the massacre.

I bided me time 'til me wounds healed while my captors bargained with my enemies. Then I claimed the right of every pirate captive to fight for a place among them. That's when I fought a score of their champions one at a time and thrashed them soundly. I'll save the details of that adventure for some other time thrilling adventure, that one, but might put you off your food!

I seized the only avenue fortune had left open to me and became the very thing I had despised—a buccaneer, only one determined to take revenge on all my enemies. Me rapier put paid to the swagger and insolence of more than one buccaneer captain. From their ranks, I rose like a comet in the heavens 'til I commanded a fleet of pirate galleons.

Fate had given me a chance to strike back at the Barrarans, and strike back I did with vengeance in my heart and a gory blade in my hand! My ships plundered the Barraran trade routes without mercy. That's where I acquired me manservant, Swoggs, and his dimensional closet. I stocked the larder and wine cellar with the best food and drink to be found along the Phlogiston, the very fare you're savoring now. But along the way I learned the bitter fate that had befallen my native world.

Once the Barrarans and their allies had defeated the Astrylonian armada, it only remained for our precious merchant princes to complete the betrayal of Astrylon. The old Doge fell dead upon learning of the defeat of our armada. The Diet of Elders was compelled to elect a weakling in his place to be the puppet of our conquerors. They sacked Astrylon of its treasures; turned the people into their chattels; and sounded the death knell for our golden age, which was defeated by greed, deceit, and the insatiable lust for filthy lucre of traitors and thieves. Free thought and the spirit of humanity were banished along with the right to carry a sword to defend them.

And what part did my love, the enchanting Nimone, play in all this? Why, not much at all. Not much, if you don't count the fact that she exploited the situation for her own profit; that she fomented the alliance between Barrara and the three worlds who defeated us; that she took plunder from the sack of Astrylon; and that Barrara and its allies still pay her rich tribute not to use her magic against them. No, not much…

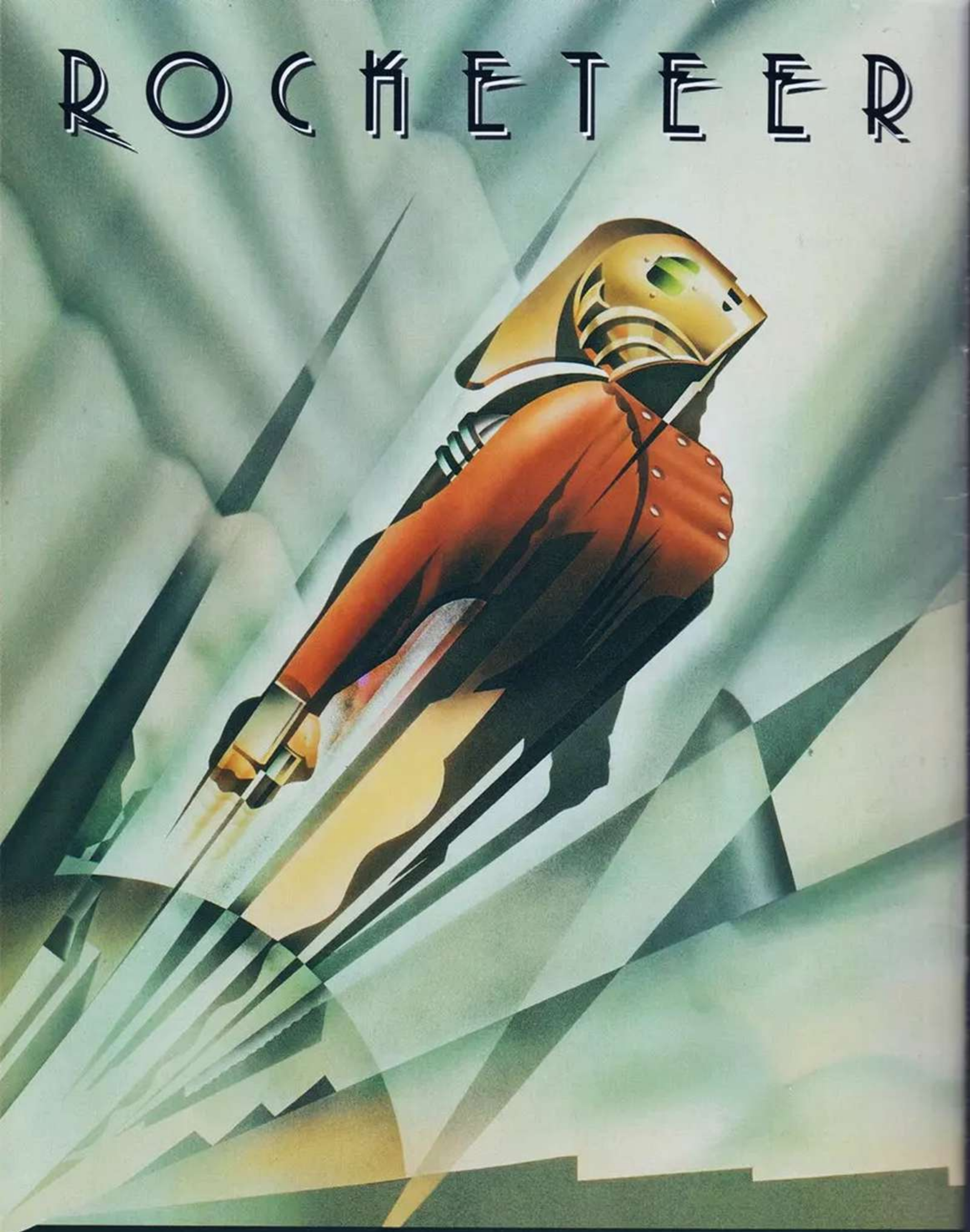
And as far as I was concerned? She sent me off to die without so much as a "by your leave." And when she learned that I wasn't courteous enough to die as planned, she employed her magic to aid the Barrarans in massacring the very buccaneers who had become my comrades.

For you see, with Nimone, good and evil are of little matter. She holds herself above such things. No… no poetry ever stirred her soul and no love ever lived within her as long as a single heartbeat. Her passion is for magic, her mission is to acquire power, and the only currency in her heart is the lust for treasure—and that is all that means anything to her. Yet for me, if there is any difference between that and pure evil, I cannot see it.

So, I live for the time when I can put paid to that old score; when I make one last journey to Astrylon; when I face that weakling who sits in the Doge's chamber and my sword separates him from his life; when I strike off our peoples' chains and throw those precious merchant princes who betrayed us to the mercy of the mob.

And as for Nimone? I know of no magic spells that can defeat her. I know no way to repay her for her treachery. But my heart has not surrendered hope, and my will searches for the way. And while I bide my time, I feel the burning embers of chivalry in my heart; hear the voices of slain heroes echoing in my memory; know the stirring of the Muse in my soul; and keep one eternal thought in my mind: the ultimate clash in which I face all my old enemies—deceit, greed, hypocrisy, injustice, cruelty, tyranny, and evil. To render them a final defeat, I would gladly lay down my life.

ROCKETEER



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